

Subject: re: PROPOSAL TO DESIGNATE CRITICAL HABITAT TO PROTECT PS ORCAS
From: Jeanne Hyde <141157@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, 28 Jun 2006 10:38:58 -0700 (PDT)
To: orcahabitat.nwr@noaa.gov

These comments come from my observations since June of 2004 of boats, kayaks, orcas and what goes on along the area of Lime Kiln Point State Park, located along the west side of San Juan Island, Friday Harbor, WA.

I spend most everyday at the park from late April until the whales leave for the fall and have made many observations.

KAYAKERS

-from my observations it appears that kayakers more often do not follow the guidelines for when whales are present.

-kayakers often sit at the shore in Deadman's Bay and wait until the whales are coming (I assume they have a radio and listen in) and as soon as the whales approach they launch and actually get right in front of the whales. Sometimes they do raft-up but they positioned themselves in front of the on-coming whales - i.e. they knew the whales were coming and set themselves up. Sometimes they don't even raft-up and become what appears to be an obstacle course for the whales. This refers to commerical kayak companies and their guides and also private kayakers.

-Often the whales will dive way before the 'spread-out' kayakers and surface way after them. But before the whales reached these kayakers the whales had been traveling much differently. - hence it appears they often change their pattern to get around all that 'debris' in the water.

-many times kayakers will frantically paddle after the whale(s) trying to catch up to it - now the kayak is even more moving debris for the whale to have to stay away from.

-When kayaks do raft-up and get in the kelp the whales do not seem to change their travel pattern and often times a whale will surface near the kayakers.

SUGGESTION: Every person who exits the ferry with a kayak strapped to their vehicle should be given a handout so there is no way they can say they didn't know.

Or maybe put the handout on the windshields of ALL the vehicles when they are either on the ferry or they are in line at Anacortes. THIS WAY NO ONE COULD SAY THEY DIDN'T KNOW.

PRIVATE BOATS

-There are some private boats that come out to 'watch the whales' on a repeated basis. It seems they 'should' know the rules along Lime Kiln State Park area but they continually, day after day, get right in the middle of them. All the commercial boats are 1/2 mile off shore while these few private boats appear to ignore what is occurring. (sometimes i wonder if they are photographers who just have to get their picture to sell.) I don't understand why these repeated offenders aren't stopped.

-There are some private boats, who seem to really be whale watchers, who drop their fishing line just before the whales get there - of course they are right in the path of the whales...are they saying they are really just fishing??? this has occurred off Lime Kiln Park area quite often over the season.

-there are some private boats that will go full throttle right over the path of the whales.

-there have even been people on shore telling boaters to turn off their motors or to move because whales are coming and the person/people on the boats curse back at the people on the shore! ugh.

-I've heard private boaters talking to each other over the radio laughing about not getting into trouble...

-sometimes I would stand on shore and pretend to be filming a private boater and within a minute or two they would move out. whether they thought they were being filmed or it was just coincidence I'm not sure, but I have done that several times with the same result.

SUGGESTION; every boat purchase to include the Guidelines (hopefully someday the Rules) about appropriate behavior around the whales.

and maybe with every boat registration, with every moorage payment....someway so that there are NO more excuses about not knowing.

Fine some of these private boaters A LOT of \$ **and** ban their boat from these waters from April through October (common whale time)because if you are driving a million dollar yacht then a few thousand dollars is a drop in the bucket. but if you ban their boat then maybe it will sink in. This could even be used for repeat offenders.

COMMERCIAL BOATS

-I have seen a huge difference to the positive in commerical boat behavior this year over last year. The 1/2 mile zone along the park appears to be being honored very stringently by the commercial operators. I do not know what goes on with the commerical boats in other areas.

-Purse Seiner boats - they travel right along the shore line - I have been told it is to save fuel because their fishing season is so short, etc. and they need to save \$. there are a couple of these boats who do not even slow down for the whales and there are others who do slow way down but continue right close to shore even though the whales are all around them.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Hyde
P O Box 862
Friday Harbor, WA

Do you Yahoo!?

Next-gen email? Have it all with the [all-new Yahoo! Mail Beta.](#)